

Message Text

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SAM-01 OES-03 SP-02 SS-15 STR-04 TRSE-00 AGR-05

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMEMBASSY COLOMBO

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: EINV,

SUBJECT: SRI LANKA ELIGIBILITY FOR GENERALIZED PREFERENCES

REF: COLOMBO 3075

1. STAFF-LEVEL INTERAGENCY COORDINATING GROUP ON EXPROPRIATION MET SEPTEMBER 26 TO REVIEW COUNTRY ELIGIBILITY FOR GSP UNDER SECTION 502 (B) (4) OF THE TRADE ACT OF 1974. BASED ON EVIDENCE OF CONTINUING CONTACTS BETWEEN EXXON AND THE GSL, IT WAS DECIDED THAT SRI LANKA IS CONTINUING TO TAKE APPROPRIATE STEPS TO DISCHARGE ITS
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OBLIGATIONS UNDER INTERNATIONAL LAW AS REQUIRED BY

SECTION 502 (B) (4) (D) (II).

2. THE GROUP, IN ITS EXAMINATION OF CASES IN A NUMBER OF COUNTRIES (INCLUDING SRI LANKA), WAS CRITICAL OF THE SLOW PACE TOWARD SETTLEMENT OF U.S. PROPERTY CLAIMS. WE THEREFORE CONCUR WITH EMBASSY VIEW THAT IT SHOULD CONTINUE TO APPROACH HIGHEST APPROPRIATE LEVEL OF GSL TO PRESS FOR EXPEDITIOUS SETTLEMENT OF EXXON CLAIM.

3. EMBASSY SHOULD ALSO BE AWARE THAT STAFF-LEVEL DECISION REPORTED PARA 1 MAY BE SUBJECT TO FURTHER REVIEW WITHIN

THE EXECUTIVE BRANCH BEFORE ANNOUNCEMENT OF COUNTRY ELIGIBILITY FOR GSP IS MADE IN THE NEXT FEW MONTHS. THIS REINFORCES THE NEED FOR ACTION RECOMMENDED PARA 2 TO ENCOURAGE PROMPT RESOLUTION OF CLAIM, AND SUGGESTS THAT ANY APPROACH AT THIS TIME TO APPRISE GSL OF ITS POTENTIAL ELIGIBILITY FOR GSP SHOULD BE MADE WITH CAUTION, AND SHOULD EMPHASIZE THAT OUR PRESENT JUDGMENT MAY BE MODIFIED BEFORE GSP GOES INTO EFFECT. FYI: IN ADDITION, AFTER GSP IS IMPLEMENTED, AND AS LONG AS THE GENERALIZED SYSTEM OF PREFERENCES REMAINS IN EFFECT, WE WILL REVIEW ELIGIBILITY OF ALL POTENTIAL BENEFICIARIES ON A REGULAR BASIS TO ASSURE THEIR CONTINUING COMPLIANCE WITH TITLE V OF THE TRADE ACT. END FYI.

4. AFTER MANY ATTEMPTS, WE WERE ABLE TO REACH SOMEONE IN EXXON KNOWLEDGEABLE ABOUT ITS SRI LANKAN CASE ON SEPTEMBER 26TH. NEFF HAS NOT YET ARRIVED IN THE U.S. AND HIS TRIP MAY BE POSTPONED OR CANCELLED. NEVERTHELESS, EMBASSY'S MESSAGE IN PARAGRAPH 6 REFTEL WAS PASSED ON TO EXXON. WE WERE ASKED TO CONVEY TO AMBASSADOR VAN HOLLEN EXXON'S THANKS FOR PAST EMBASSY SUPPORT IN COMPANY'S NEGOTIATING EFFORTS. INGERSOLL

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